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RELIGIOUS REQUIREMENTS AND PRACTICES

of Certain Selected Groups

A HANDBOOK FOR CHAPLAINS

HEADQUARTERS, DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY
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A HANDBOOK FOR CHAPLAINS

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THE FOUNDATION FAITH OF THE MILLENIUM
1147 First Avenue
New York, New York 10021

Father Raphael

(name changed to The Foundation Faith of God as of December, 1977)

HISTORICAL ROOTS: In 1963, a group of professionals of several nationalities from the U.S., Canada, and Europe came together to initiate a movement which was to become the Foundation Faith of the Millenium. From 1963 to 1974, they worked extensively in the social service field, including individual and group counseling and the establishment of centers in a number of American cities (providing a community coffeehouse, courses and lectures, and services).

The group's formative religious experience took place in 1966. In a type of religious retreat, the group (30 members) lived in a place called Xtul on the Yucatan peninsula. This period of intense examination was a time of religious and spiritual revelation for both the total group and for its individual members. A time of great ascetism, it functioned much as the Exodus did for the Jews. From this period came the strong and simple belief which forms the basis of the Foundation Faith.

CURRENT WORLD LEADERS: There is no single "leader" as such. From the Council of Luminaries (See "Organizational Structure"), four senior members are elected annually as an executive committee to oversee the administration and organization of the Foundation Faith.

ORIGINS IN THE U.S.: (See also "Historical Roots.") The group first started working in New Orleans in 1967. The Foundation Faith of the Millenium was incorporated in New York State in 1974.

NUMBER OF ADHERENTS IN THE U.S.: Approximately 20,000 with a direct religious affiliation, and more than 500,000 affiliated with the many programs, primarily educational, sponsored and organized by the Foundation Faith.

Organization, Leadership, Worship

ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE: The Foundation Faith is organized along strict hierarchical lines, with ministers gaining seniority according to their experience and ability. The ranks of the ministry are: (1) Ordained Ministers, known as Father or Mother, including Luminaries, Minor Luminaries, and Celebrants; (2) Regular Ministers, known as Brother or Sister, including Mentors and Covenanters; and (3) Ministers-in-Training, including Witnesses and Aspirants. The Council of Luminaries (currently 15 members) is the governing body, and consists of all Luminaries and Minor Luminaries. A minister promoted to Minor Luminary automatically becomes a member of the Council.

Ranks also exist within the laity, the most common being Lay Founder. These may serve as lay minister after instruction by a minister.

The Foundation Faith is administered internationally from its New York headquarters. Other branches consist of both ministerial teams and lay members who conduct activities in the absence of ministerial personnel.

LEADERSHIP AND ROLE OF MINISTERS: (See also "Organizational Structure.") All ministers may conduct all services held by the Foundation Faith. Women occupy and have the same opportunity to occupy all positions open to men. As the Foundation Faith expands, greater responsibility likely will be delegated to the laity for conducting local affairs in a number of cities.

WHO MAY CONDUCT SERVICES? All ministers, and certain lay members after due instruction from a full-time minister.

IS GROUP WORSHIP REQUIRED? No. Group worship occurs daily at all branches. In cities or areas where no center exists, individual worship on a personal basis is encouraged.

WORSHIP REQUIREMENTS: The main religious service is on Saturday evening, as Saturday is the Sabbath for The Foundation Faith. Other services occur daily, and members also hold morning and evening prayer, usually in the form of private prayer.

MINIMUM EQUIPMENT FOR WORSHIP: None for individual worshipers. A group meeting in communal worship requires: a table to serve as an altar, bowls to contain fire and water, candles in a specific arrangement, incense, a Foundation symbol (logo of the Faith), and chairs for the congregation.

FACILITIES FOR WORSHIP: For an individual, a private, quiet room. For groups, a room is required where equipment can be set up on a permanent basis, and which members can visit for private prayer and meditation.

OTHER SPECIFIC RELIGIOUS REQUIREMENTS OTHER THAN WORSHIP: No specific requirements. However, The Foundation Faith is active in the field of personal development and communication. It conducts numerous workshops in this area to help individuals.

DIETARY LAWS OR RESTRICTIONS: No specific restrictions. Members are encouraged to eat a healthy and balanced diet, utilizing health foods and vitamin supplements wherever possible.

SPECIAL RELIGIOUS HOLIDAYS: May 20th (Foundation Day) and November 20th (Founder's Day). Founders take the day off work, and, if near a center, take part in religious services and festivals. Covenant Month (October 20 - November 20), while not a holiday per se, commemorates the original religious experience of the group. Considerable activity takes place in all branches at that time.

Requirements, Position on Service

FUNERAL AND BURIAL REQUIREMENTS: There is a specified funeral service, to be conducted by a Foundation Faith minister. When this is impossible, the Faith recognizes the validity of services conducted by most denominations for this purpose. If an individual member requests it, his body is brought to a Foundation Faith center for the service, or a memorial service is held after a burial in a foreign land.

AUTOPSY: No restrictions.

CREMATION: Individual choice; no restrictions.

MEDICAL TREATMENT: Generally no restrictions. However, one of the principle activities of The Foundation Faith is in its healing ministry, both mental and physical healing. The former takes place through counseling, the latter through the laying on of hands. The Foundation Faith conducts a number of services devoted specifically to healing.

UNIFORM APPEARANCE REQUIREMENTS: None.

POSITION ON SERVICE IN THE ARMED FORCES: Service in defense of family and homeland is accepted as a necessity, but wars not directly fulfilling this function (Vietnam is cited as an example) are not condoned. The Faith fully supports ministers and members objecting to service in a theater such as Vietnam. War is viewed as a necessity arising out of man's alienation from God. Killing, including killing animals, is abhorred. The Foundation Faith recognizes the sanctity of all life as created by God and not to be taken by man.

IS A MINISTER REQUIRED AT THE TIME OF DEATH? No, but preferred if possible.